



Saving TEXAS HISTORY

The Texas General Land Office
Archives and Records Newsletter

Jerry Patterson, Commissioner

*Vol. 10 Number 2 * Summer 2013*



Commissioner Jerry Patterson addresses hundreds of people who patiently awaited the arrival of the Travis Letter to the Alamo.

The Travis Letter Returns to the Alamo

by James Harkins, Director of Public Services

Not since the 150th anniversary of Texas independence in 1986—the Texas sesquicentennial a generation ago—has Texas focused on history like it did during the February 23-March 8 “Victory or Death” Travis Letter exhibit at the Alamo.

More than 23,000 visitors waited in long lines and braved biting cold and blazing sun to see the famous, faded letter in a darkened Alamo church. Many were moved to tears by the impassioned, patriotic plea for help from the 26-year-old Alamo commander.

Continued inside ...

3

**THE 4TH ANNUAL
SAVE TEXAS HISTORY
SYMPOSIUM—THE
ALAMO: MISSION AND
MYTH**

5

**THE BATTLE OF THE
ALAMO: AMERICANS,
TEJANOS AND
EUROPEANS—ALL
TEXANS**

8

**FOR THE GOOD OF
PEACE AND HARMONY: A
TREATY FOR THE FUTURE
OF SAN ANTONIO**

THE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS PROGRAM
TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
1700 North Congress, Ste. 131
Austin, Texas 78701-1495

Mark Lambert, Deputy Commissioner
512.463.5260

Susan Smith Dorsey, Director of
Technical Services
512.463.5274

James Harkins, Director of Public
Services
512.463.5274

D'Anne Stites, Save Texas History
512.463.6740



Saving Texas History is a publication of the Archives and Records Program of the Texas General Land Office. It is published quarterly and is available by request or online at savetexashistory.org.

The Texas General Land Office does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. To request special accommodations, call the Director of Human Resources/ADA Coordinator at 512.475.1390. To contact us by TDD call 512.463.5330 or through RELAY Texas at 1.800.735.2988, or mail your request to P.O. Box 12873, Austin, Texas 78711-2873.

Continued from page 1



The Travis Letter exhibit injected positive energy into the most historic site in Texas history in late February and early March, commemorating the 177th anniversary of the Fall of the Alamo.

ed States about the exhibit, along with numerous articles by the Associated Press and Reuters. Additionally, there were dozens of news stories dedicated to the Travis Letter exhibit on local, statewide and national television. Indeed, people were talking about the Alamo, the Travis letter and Texas history like no other time in many years.

“If there is to be any aftereffect of the Travis letter event—and I think there are many—one has to be a new appreciation for the history that the Alamo represents,” said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. “It must again be seen as the crossroads of Texas history. Not just the location of a single battle in 1836, but as the very cornerstone of Texas. As one of the first Spanish missions, San Antonio de Valero set the stage for all that was to eventually become Texas.”

At a time when Texas history standards and curriculum are constantly threatened, and of diminishing emphasis on the study of Texas history in the classroom, the Travis Letter exhibit offered a shot in the arm for Texas history lovers. Texans were reminded of the battle that was the turning point in Texas history. They were reminded that our history is important, and unique among the 50 states.

“For the first time in a long while, Texans saw the Alamo in a new light,” Patterson said. “The Alamo was seen not only as a tourist destination and photo backdrop, but as a place where history actually happened. A place where men like Travis lived and died like heroes.”

The Travis Letter exhibit was designed to share this iconic letter with “all Texans, and all Americans in the world.” It accomplished the same goal Travis intended in 1836—inspiring everyone to rally to the Alamo. ✱



Lines snaked around Alamo Plaza, with thousands of Texans, and guests from all over the world, waiting to get a glimpse of the most famous letter in Texas history, William Barret Travis' “Victory or Death” letter that was penned February 24, 1836.

page 2

A record was set at the newly renovated Alamo Gift Shop, with sales of \$291,951 for the two-week period. An additional \$69,010 was raised by the “Allies of the Alamo” membership program, which helps preserve and protect the Shrine of Texas Liberty for future generations.

There were 75 separate newspaper articles written around Texas and the Unit-

The 4th Annual Save Texas History Symposium *The Alamo: Mission and Myth*

by James Harkins, Director of Public Services



The 4th Annual Save Texas History Symposium is coming up on Saturday, September 7. A number of well-respected historians from across the state will delve into the history of the Alamo like never before.

This year, the symposium will be held at the Menger Hotel, the historic 1859 building adjacent to the Shrine of Texas Liberty, the Alamo.

Since the Texas General Land Office became custodian of the Alamo, its goal has been to improve the most important site in Texas history. One way to accomplish this is to broaden the narrative of the Alamo, focusing not only on the epic battle, but on more than 100 years of Mission San Antonio de Valero history preceding it, as well as the Republic and state eras. In keeping

with this vision, the symposium will offer a comprehensive look at the Alamo, Mission and Myth.

Among the plenary speakers will be Dr. Andres Tijerina, author of *Tejanos and Texas under the Mexican Flag, 1821-1836* and *Tejano Empire: Life on the South Texas Ranchos*, who will discuss the emergence of the “flying squadron,” or the *La Segunda Compania Volante of San Carlos de Parras*. This group was a law enforcement squadron in Texas under the Spanish and Mexican flags, and the company that gave the Alamo its present name.



Ed Cotham, a prize-winning author and Civil War lecturer, spoke about the Union's capture of Galveston at last year's symposium.

SYMPOSIUM AT A GLANCE

WHEN

Saturday, September 7, 2013
Doors open at 8 am

WHERE

The Menger Hotel
204 Alamo Plaza, San Antonio, Texas 78205

REGISTRATION COST

\$50 — Symposium Registration
\$62 — Symposium Registration & Buffet Lunch

VIP RECEPTION COST

\$70—Alamo Hall (5:30 - 8:00 p.m.)

REGISTER ONLINE

savetexashistory.org

Dr. Alwyn Barr, author of many Texas history books, including *Texans in Revolt: The Battle for San Antonio, 1835*, will discuss the bloody siege and storming of Bexar.

We will also welcome Thomas T. Smith, retired Colonel of the United States Army, and author of *The Old Army in Texas: A Research Guide to the U.S. Army in Nineteenth-Century Texas*. Smith will explain the role of the Union Army in San Antonio, and how the Alamo was used during the Civil War.

Additionally, the afternoon will feature several breakout sessions that attendees are able to choose from, including tours of the battleground, tours of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, and tours that will develop an understanding of the frescoes inside the Alamo.

There will also be several afternoon lectures from notable Texas

Continued on Page 4

page 3

Continued from page 3

historians, including a fascinating grouping of lectures that fit the theme of the day, Mission and Myth, as we welcome Dr. Frank de la Teja, former State Historian and Supple Professor of Southwestern Studies and Director of the Center for the Study of the Southwest at Texas State University, who will discuss the fascinating story of the secularization of the Mission San Antonio de Valero. With Dr. de la Teja will be Dr. Stephen Hardin, author of *Texian Iliad: A Military History of the Texas Revolution* and *Texian Macabre: A Melancholy Tale of a Hanging in Early Houston*, who will discuss the Battle of the Alamo and its associated myth.

Additional lectures will feature Dr. Gilberto Hinojosa, from the University of the Incarnate Word, who will discuss the different cultural interactions in the Spanish missions, as well as Ms. Kristi Miller-Nichols, archaeologist from the Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Texas at San Antonio, who will delve into an archaeological look at the Alamo based on her extensive work there.

For those who wish to learn more about their own personal history, there will be a four-part genealogical workshop. Kevin Klaus, Research Room Team Leader for the Texas General Land Office Archives and Records, will help genealogists understand the resources available from the GLO Archives and Records. Galen Greaser, former Spanish Translator for the Land Office, will discuss the genealogical resources that can be found in the Spanish Collection of the GLO Archives. John Wheat will discuss the genealogical resources of the Bexar Archives at the Dolph Briscoe Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and David Carlson, Spanish Archivist for Bexar County, will discuss genealogical resources in Bexar County.

Finally, a special VIP after-hours reception will be held at Alamo Hall for an additional \$70 per person. Attendees will be able to tour the Alamo at night, including tours inside the Shrine of Texas Liberty. Even better, attendees who take advantage of this VIP after-hours reception will be joined by the day's speakers themselves, and fellow Texas history lovers who attended the symposium. This will be a very special event that is available exclusively to attendees of the Save Texas History Symposium. You will not want to miss it! ✨

TO REGISTER, CONTACT

JAMES HARKINS

512.463.3289

james.harkins@glo.texas.gov

OR

D'ANNE STITES

512.463.6740

danne.stites@glo.texas.gov

REGISTER ONLINE

SAVETEXASHISTORY.ORG

**EXHIBITOR AND SPONSOR
INQUIRIES CONTACT**

ADRIAN LOUCKS

512.463.7497

adrian.loucks@glo.texas.gov



Dr. Frank de la Teja will discuss the secularization of the Mission San Antonio de Valero.



Dr. Stephen Hardin will discuss the Battle of the Alamo.



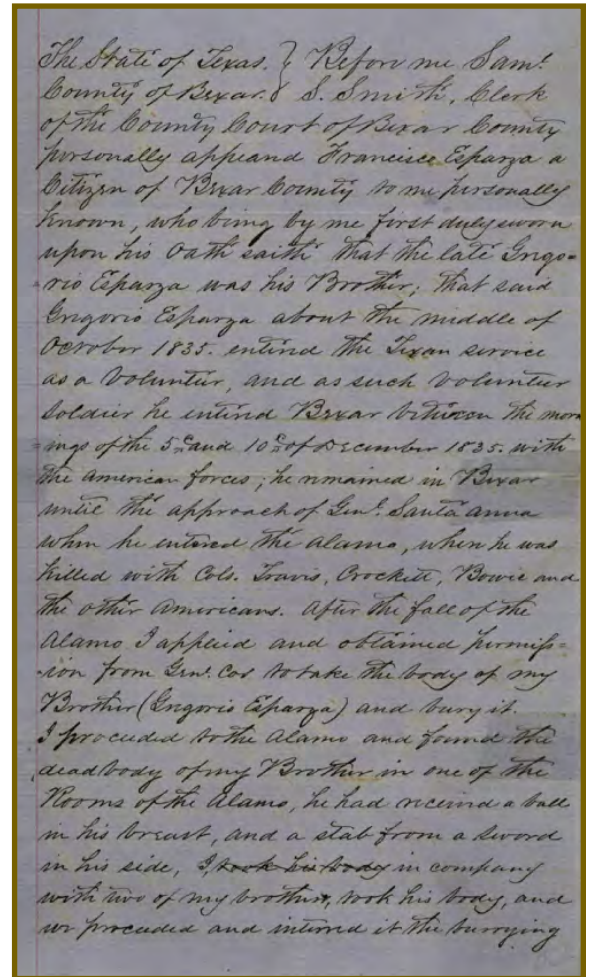
An after-hours reception and tour of the Alamo will be available for an additional cost.

The Battle of the Alamo: Americans, Tejanos and Europeans – All Texans

by Patrick Walsh, Researcher

The United States has, from its earliest days, been a nation of immigrants. People from extraordinarily divergent backgrounds eventually found the means to coexist and build what we recognize today as American society. Through westward expansion, we Americans came to view this land as our own—a proud culture of people inhabiting a beautiful landscape. The same can be said for Texas itself, which brandishes a well-earned reputation for being distinctly Texan. But what is a Texan, specifically, and how did the people of this land become Texans? With the help of documents housed in the Archives of the General Land Office, we can trace the Texan identity.

After gaining independence from Spain, the Mexican government began to loosen immigration restrictions for its outlying colonies. Empresarios such as Stephen F. Austin were provided contracts to bring settlers into Texas and form colonies as Mexican citizens. The sudden rush of Anglo-American colonists resulted in Hispanic settlers of Texas being outnumbered nearly 7-to-1 within a decade.¹ Immigrants from all over the United States and as far away as Europe arrived to stake their claims to the vast expanses of land Texas offered. Over time, cultural and political differences and the distance between Texas and the central Mexican government created rifts that led to the start of the Texas Revolution at the Battle of Gonzales in October 1835.² Notable among the wave of new residents were William Barret Travis of Alabama, James Bowie of Kentucky, and David Crockett of Tennessee, all of whom would go on to serve in the Texan military at the Battle of the Alamo in February and March of 1836.³ Joining these settlers as well were many Tejanos like Gregorio Esparza and Juan Seguín.



The State of Texas. I Report me Saml
County of Bexar. S. Smith, Clerk
of the County Court of Bexar County
personally appeared Francisco Esparza a
Citizen of Bexar County to me personally
known, who being by me first duly sworn
upon his Oath saith that the late Grego-
rio Esparza was his Brother; that said
Gregorio Esparza about the middle of
October 1835, entered the Texan service
as a Volunteer, and as such Volunteer
soldier he entered Bexar between the mor-
nings of the 5th and 10th of December 1835. with
the American forces; he remained in Bexar
until the approach of Genl. Santa Anna
when he entered the Alamo, when he was
killed with Cols. Travis, Crockett, Bowie and
the other Americans. After the fall of the
Alamo I appeared and obtained permis-
sion from Genl. Cos to take the body of my
Brother (Gregorio Esparza) and bury it.
I proceeded to the Alamo and found the
dead body of my Brother in one of the
rooms of the Alamo, he had received a ball
in his breast, and a stab from a sword
in his side, I took his body in company
with two of my brothers, took his body, and
we proceeded and interred it the burying

Touching testimony about Gregorio Esparza's service to Texas while at the Alamo.

The Alamo and the battle that occurred represent one of the great iconic images of the Texas spirit—courage and strength in the face of overwhelming odds, and a fighting spirit that perished only with the last defender. Texans to this day cite the Alamo as a source of inspiration and determination in the face of modern obstacles. Militarily, the outcome at the Alamo was a defeat for the Texans; however, the valor displayed by the fallen inspired the remainder of the Texan military to stand firm against the approaching Mexican army. The Battle of the Alamo directly influenced the eventual creation of the Republic of Texas. When Travis wrote “to the people of Texas and all Americans in the world,” to whom was he writing? How many of those defenders were actually from Texas?

Today's estimates suggest that at least 189 men died while attempting to withstand Santa Anna's forces.⁴ The *Telegraph and Texas Register* of San Felipe de Austin is considered the first public accounting of the Texan casualties.⁵ Its version of events is reinforced by the Republic of Texas Muster Roll,⁶ as well as affidavits and testimonies associated with land donations for fallen soldiers, which provide details on the home states and dates of emigration of the enlisted men. Among those listed at the Alamo, 27 are listed as from Texas. Evidence of the Texas roots of other known soldiers appears through out the collection as well, like Gregorio Esparza. Documents show that, in part because he was born

Continued on Page 6

page 5

Continued from page 5

and raised in Texas, Esparza's surviving family was granted permission by Santa Anna to remove his body from the Alamo and inter the remains in a Christian cemetery near San Antonio.⁷ No other defender of the Alamo was allowed this treatment.

When considering sources beyond the Muster Roll, approximately 80 percent of those killed came from outside Texas—primarily from the United States and Western Europe. The mixed ethnic and national makeup of those who fought at the Alamo suggests that the concept of “being a Texan”—if yet formed at all—was certainly in its infancy. The fight against what was perceived as a corrupt and distant government united the Texan immigrants and native Tejanos in a common cause to protect their property and livelihood despite their diverse origins. The actions of the Texan soldiers at the Battle of the Alamo contributed greatly toward the creation and development of the Texan identity.

Perhaps the Alamo's greatest enrichment of the Texan identity came from the pen of Travis in his famous “Victory or Death” letter.⁸ Travis realized the situation of the men inside the Alamo was steadily worsening as he was “besieged, by a thousand or more Mexicans under Santa Anna.” When an unconditional surrender was demanded of him, Travis “answered...with a cannon shot” and defiantly maintained the flag over the walls of the Alamo. He wrote and sent the letter as a final, impassioned attempt at procuring reinforcements. However, he vowed that he would stand his ground no matter what, without surrender or retreat, and to “die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country.” His closing words, “Victory or Death” came true when the garrison was overrun and all its defenders killed. Through this sacrifice, Travis' words would instill a new brand of Texan patriotism that would be a crucial factor in the victory over Santa Anna, and has lived on in Texans today. ✨

WHERE THEY CAME FROM

PLACES OF ORIGIN OF ALAMO DEFENDERS LISTED ON MUSTER ROLL

Texas – 27	Massachusetts – 1
Virginia – 1	Georgia – 1
Kentucky – 2	Denmark – 1
Pennsylvania – 4	Wales – 1
Tennessee – 6	England – 4
South Carolina – 2	Ireland – 4
Mississippi – 2	Scotland – 2
New York – 1	No place or origin listed – 42
Louisiana – 8	

While the Muster Roll only includes 109 names, scholars agree that there were at least 189 Texans at the Alamo.

Footnotes

- ¹ “Census and Census Records,” Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ulc01>), accessed December 18, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
- ² Stephen L. Hardin, “Gonzalez, Battle of,” Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qeg03>), accessed December 18, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
- ³ Stephen L. Hardin, “Alamo, Battle of the,” Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qea02>), accessed December 18, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
- ⁴ Stephen L. Hardin, “Alamo, Battle of the,” Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qea02>), accessed December 18, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
- ⁵ Baker & Bordens, editor. Telegraph and Texas Register (San Felipe de Austin [i.e. San Felipe], Tex.), Vol. 1, No. 21, Ed. 1, Thursday, March 24, 1836, Newspaper, March 24, 1836; digital images, (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht47891/> : accessed December 18, 2012), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas.
- ⁶ Muster Roll, “List of the names of those who fell in the Alamo at San Antonia de Bexar, March 6, 1836,” Archives and Records Program, Texas General Land Office, Austin, Texas. By viewing the muster roll list of those who fell with Travis, we see that he was writing to Texans from all over the world.
- ⁷ Court of Claims of Gregorio Esparza, Filed May 26, 1860, Court of Claims #2558 (cc 2558), Archives and Records Program, Texas General Land Office, Austin, Texas.
- ⁸ William Barret Travis' Letter From the Alamo. February 26, 1836; digital images, (<https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/treasures/republic/alamo/travis-02.html> : accessed December 18, 2012), Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas.

MAP SPOTLIGHT

United States of America Compiled from the Latest and Best Authorities by John Melish – 1820 (1824)

Map #89220

by Alex Chiba, Map Curator

John Melish was a Scottish mapmaker who immigrated to Philadelphia in 1811 and almost immediately set to work producing atlases and maps of the United States.

By 1816, Melish published the first edition of what became arguably the most important map of the United States published in the 19th century. It was the first attempt in the United States to produce a coast-to-coast map using the combined findings of the legendary expeditions by Lewis and Clark and Zebulon Pike earlier in the century. This map was so well received—one big fan was Thomas Jefferson—that the 1819 version would be used as the official map that accompanied and reflected the Adams-Onís Treaty. This treaty between the United States and Spain ceded Florida to the former in exchange for \$5 million and the relinquishment of any claims to Texas the United States may have felt it had by virtue of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.



John Melish made this map of the United States of America before the West was settled, and before Texas had the familiar border that we know today.

The 1820 version of Melish's map of the United States (republished in 1824) is a smaller atlas version of his ubiquitous earlier map, reflecting changes to collective cartographic knowledge after Adams-Onís. On this version, Texas is clearly reflected as part of Spain/Mexico,¹ with the Sabine, Red and Arkansas rivers shown as the boundaries between U.S. territories and Spain. "Texas" is labeled, as is the town of "Galvezton" in a very curious location, close to where Beaumont is today.

This version of the map only extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains, whereas the 1816 and 1819 versions extended from coast to coast. But there are still some interesting notations that reflect the work of Lewis, Clark and Pike. Most of the major western river systems reflected on this map owe much to the Lewis and Clark expedition. Near the westernmost edge of the map along the 44th parallel near "Jefferson's River" is the notation "*Clark's canoes stop 3000 miles from the Mississippi.*" And one can observe the "*Highest Peak*" notation between the Platte and Arkansas rivers which we know today as "Pike's Peak." Indeed, much of the topography of the Rocky Mountains comes directly from Pike's expedition. In addition, various Native American villages are spotted all over the map, again drawing from many of the stops Lewis, Clark and Pike made on their respective expeditions.

The Archives of the Texas General Land Office has within its collection this 1820 version of Melish's masterwork in outstanding condition. It remains one of the best cartographic examples in our collection that "sets the stage" geographically for what was to come with regard to Texas Independence and the impact it had on the construction of the United States. In other words, it provides an excellent snapshot of our nation as it was configured in the decade leading up to the Texas Revolution and beyond.

This map is part of the permanent archival collection of the Texas General Land Office with color copies available for just \$20.00. ✨

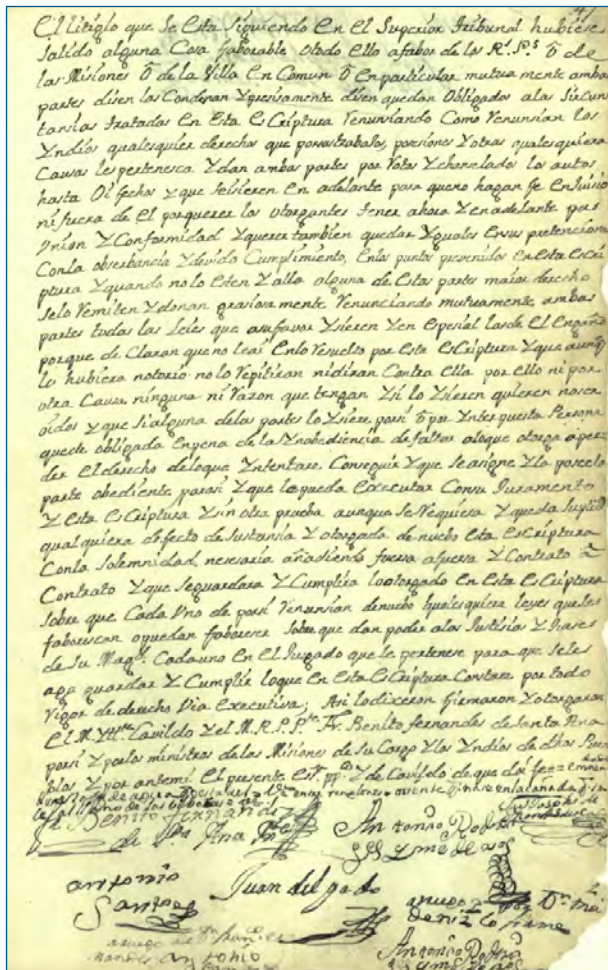
¹ Spain did not officially recognize Mexican independence until 1821. The map is dated 1820 but was republished in 1824. For the sake of consistency Spain will be referenced for the rest of this article.

For the Good of Peace and Harmony: A Treaty for the Future of San Antonio

by José Adrián Barragán, Spanish Translator

Long before that fateful day in March 1836, and long before Mexican troops renamed it “El Álamo” after their company and sequestered its buildings and walls, Mission San Antonio de Valero served as a place of worship for the indigenous population of the region. There, mission friars followed centuries of traditions of educating, protecting and defending their flock. As crown-appointed “protectors,” friars provided legal counsel and representation in civil matters. This document from the holdings of the Spanish Collection at the Texas General Land Office offers a window into the various legal representations afforded by the friars on behalf of the indigenous peoples of Mission de Valero.¹

As the Villa of San Fernando de Béxar grew, individual factions vied for the survival of their vested interests, especially in regard to land ownership. Although this document does not delve into the root of their discords, evidence suggests a long-standing conflict over special privileges from the crown.² The *isleños* (Canary Islanders), who had arrived in the 1730s and founded the town, claimed the title of original settlers for themselves, regardless of the fact that other families living near the presidio, friars and indigenous peoples had already made the San Antonio area their home. Their economic situation notwithstanding, original settlers controlled posts at town councils and access to land, pasture and water, which often “endowed them with high social status” within the community.³ As such, colonists vied for viceregal dispensations of farm land and indigenous labor, both of which were essential to the survival of both mission and town.



Compromise between Mission Valero and the Cabildo of San Fernando de Béxar, 14 August 1745.

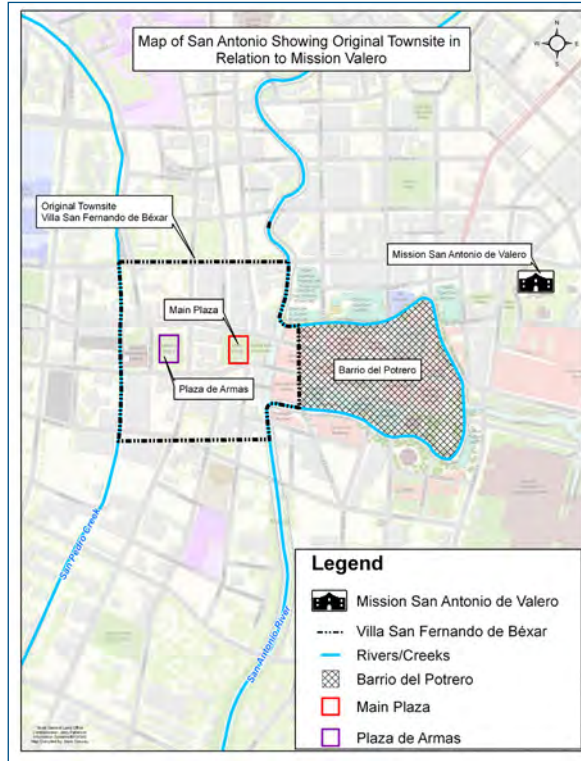
By the early 1740s, the residents’ encroachment of Mission Valero’s lands had led to bickering between the governing body of the town, the friars and the captains of the presidio. This document, penned by Francisco Joseph de Arocha, the royal notary, outlines some of the main grievances voiced by town residents and the Mission Valero friars. According to Arocha, the members of the *Ayuntamiento* (municipal council) pursued three issues: that the presidio captains buy the corn harvested by the town residents; that the friars allow the Indians to work the farm lands; and that the Indians (and with them, Mission Valero) be relocated elsewhere to prevent further damage to the residents’ ploughed fields, which they blamed on the Indians’ unfenced farm animals. In his response, the president of the Franciscan friars, Friar Benito Fernández de Santa Anna, noted that the Indians enjoyed the protection of various “causes, reasons, privileges, and laws” that safeguarded them from forced employ by the townspeople and that the Royal Tribunal in Mexico City had ruled against moving the mission.

On August 14, 1745, as the future site of the Battle of the Alamo was still under construction, the parties agreed to reconcile their differences. Despite the advantages each side stood to gain if they pressed their cases to the viceroy, the representatives from each faction gathered to agree on the future of San Antonio. In ceding to each other’s demands through their own “spontaneous will” the friars of Mission Valero and the town council of San Fernando sought to form

Continued on Page 9

page 8

a better union. For their part, the friars renounced their claims to the lands on which the town had been built. In



return, the town council agreed to create a buffer zone between the town and the mission and established the home of Juan Banul as the boundary.⁴ The only exception allowed in the treaty would be the construction of a church or any public building that would not impede the work of the mission. More importantly, to prevent any further discord between the town and the mission, both groups surveyed the land, established clear boundaries between them and promised to respect any prior and future ruling from the viceroys.

As the town continued to grow in both importance and size, and as the population at the mission began to falter, the treaty gave way to the town's demand for vacant land. In the 1760s, residents of the town began to settle the Potrero area between the mission and San Fernando.⁵ Eventually, the secularization of Mission Valero in 1793 helped to ease some of the pressure from population growth. Despite the short life of the treaty, during those middle years of growth and settlement of San Antonio de Béxar, the residents of both San Fernando and Mission Valero enjoyed a period of relative "peace, union, and conformity." ✨

Footnotes

- ¹ Compromise between the missions and the cabildo of San Fernando de Béxar pertaining to the limits of the settlement and resolution of other disputes, 14 August 1745, Box 122, Folder 5, Spanish Collection, Archives and Records Program, Texas General Land Office, Austin. For a more extensive discussion of this document from our collection, see Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Texas in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century: Studies in Spanish Colonial History and Administration* (Austin: The University of Texas Press in cooperation with The Texas State Historical Association, 1970), 26.
- ² The problems stemmed from the late 1730s. In some cases the local authorities sought to control the discord between the townsfolk by passing certain ordinances. In 1741, Captain Toribio Urrutia ordered that fences be built to keep cattle from destroying the crops of the residents, see *Proceedings concerning publication of Toribio de Urrutia's ordinance providing for the protection of cultivated fields*, May 20, 1741, Bexar Archives Online, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin. More information regarding the complaints can be found in *Copy of proceedings concerning Oconitrillo's countercharges against Canary Islanders, and Rodríguez Mederos' petition that the case be tried in due form*, circa 1745, Bexar Archives Online, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.
- ³ Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 24-25, 32.
- ⁴ Juan Banul, a master blacksmith, had received a plot of land in 1741 near the Potrero area.
- ⁵ De la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, 39.

Tell Us About Your Experience at the Land Office Archives

Have you had a good experience with the Texas General Land Office Archives? Maybe you attended a tour or presentation that took your breath away. Or maybe you learned something that you never knew about Texas history. Perhaps you discovered a document that shed some new light on one of your ancestors.

Please Friend Save Texas History on Facebook, and share your experience with us. If you are not on Facebook, please email archives@glo.texas.gov with details about your experience at the Land Office Archives.

The best story about someone's experience with the Archives will appear in the next edition of *Saving Texas History* and will win its writer a free map! ✨

Genealogy Workshop Teaches How to Use Land Records

by James Harkins, Director of Public Services

The General Land Office Archives and Records hosted its first ever genealogy workshop on May 4. With only 22 slots available, enthusiastic genealogy researchers from as far as Plover, Wisconsin registered to take part.

“We’re proud that when genealogists visit the Land Office, they’re having fun learning about their personal and family history, as well as learning about the valuable resources at the GLO,” said Mark Lambert, Deputy Commissioner of Archives and Records.

The morning was dedicated to lectures that covered four major themes for genealogical resources at the Land Office. Lectures covered:

1. Why land records are vital for genealogists, a brief history of the GLO and how the land grant process worked;
2. The unique genealogical resources of the Spanish Collection, including information on South Texas;
3. Resources available for those with German-Texan ancestry, including information about the German Immigration Contracts, the Colony Contracts, the Fisher-Miller Transfers, and information about why so many Germans came to Texas;
4. Online tools available and how researchers are now able to take advantage of 10+ years of scanning work at the Land Office, including guided instructions on how to use the GLO Surname Index, the GLO Land Grant Database, the GLO Online Map Database, and the GLO GISweb.

The afternoon consisted of attendees conducting their own research, with helpful and attentive staff available to answer all questions. Attendees were able to test the newly installed WiFi network to access online research tools, and to learn more.



Genealogists packed the GLO Research Room to learn more about their ancestors.



Alex Chiba, Archives and Records Map Curator, helps genealogists find out more about their personal history through the online resources of the GLO.

The next Genealogy
Workshop will be
Saturday, July 27

Email archives@glo.texas.gov
for more information
or to register.

The 22 attendees pulled more than 200 files, and ordered more than 528 copies, far surpassing a regular day for research at the Land Office, and keeping the copy staff busy the following Monday.

Attendees expressed their enjoyment of the workshop, praising the hands-on help from staff members, and the helpful and friendly manner of everyone who attended. Additionally, researchers enjoyed the opportunity to become familiar with the research process and learn about resources available at the Land Office. “I loved it,” said one enthusiastic genealogist.

This workshop will be held twice per year. To learn more about future workshops, please contact us at archives@glo.texas.gov. ✱

Molleston Set to Retire After 41 Years of Service

by Kevin Klaus, Team Leader



John Molleston.

Over the long history of the Texas General Land Office, many of its employees have contributed to the history of this special place. One such person is John Molleston, who has had a career spanning four decades serving the people of Texas. In his years of working in the Land Office, Molleston has been a tenacious researcher with unwavering determination. He has been instrumental in discovering new material by delving into the early workings of the Land Office, the details of how land grants worked and the history behind those early pioneers who came to settle Texas. Because of his meticulous work, when researchers study early land records, they not only learn details of a land grant file, they get a history lesson.

Molleston began his Land Office career in the Veterans Land Board file room. He later transferred to the agency's Records Division file room in the Lorenzo De Zavala Building. It was here he became associated with two other long-haired beatnik types: John Roberdeau and John Stampley. They became known as "the three Johns."

Molleston has made working in the Land Office a great experience for so many, and is well-liked personally and professionally. Alex Chiba, GLO Map Curator and Team Leader, remembers when he started 20 years ago how they found a connection in music and cinema. "After I became a research assistant, I spent many hours with John in the old and cramped windowless reading room where I got the best on-the-job training one could get," Chiba said. "John patiently spent many hours tutoring me on the intricacies of our unique archival collection, and it is the foundation that still serves me well to this day."

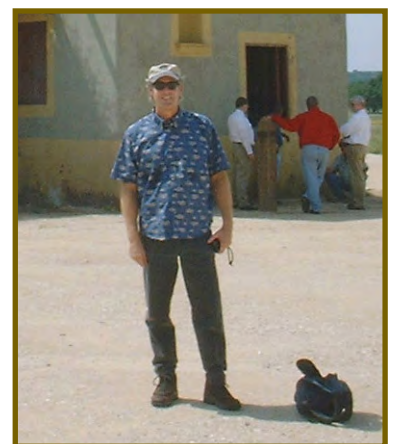
"I can truly say that there is not a more devoted person who has served the General Land Office and the people of Texas in such a selfless manner," said Susan Dorsey, Director of Technical Services for Archives and Records. "He has been responsible for guiding, encouraging and mentoring so many to understand the history of this great state." Dorsey has worked with Molleston for much of his time at the Land Office, describing him as "a sensitive person, who while set in his ways, is quiet, polite, solicitous, discreet and attentive to the needs and feelings of his fellow co-workers."

Mark Lambert, Deputy Commissioner of Archives and Records, said, "Many people have an excellent opinion of the GLO Archives because of John's excellent work here over the past 41 years. His exemplary customer service skills, love of Texas history, great appreciation for the records, and doggedness in always finding the answer to a difficult question made every one of John's customers a big fan of the GLO. He will be sorely missed."

"John is an institution here at the GLO," said James Harkins, Director of Public Services for Archives and Records. "He is so reliable, and good with customers and staff. So good, in fact, that he has trained almost everyone on our archival staff today. His appreciation for Texas history, what it represents here at the GLO, and his desire to help future generations of GLO employees and customers understand these files, has made him a true cornerstone of our department."

Little did Molleston know while playing with a toy Alamo set as a child that he would become instrumental in developing historic tours for the public at the Land Office, sharing the story of the Alamo and David Crockett with numerous visitors.

Molleston plans to retire on August 31, 2013, and it will be the end of an era. He's a valuable member of the research staff and will always be considered a great friend. ✨



John Molleston visits the set of the 2004 movie, The Alamo.

Educational Resources: DESCRIBE the Archives

by Buck Cole, Outreach Advisor

The General Land Office Archives and Records is working with Texas history educators across the state to infuse Land Office documents into the learning experience for students in new, innovative ways. One way we are doing that is by analyzing text-based primary sources. The following strategy is effective with all student reading levels.

DESCRIBE Strategy

Developed by the Dominican University School of Education in River Forest, Illinois, this strategy involves a “teacher as guide” approach to document analysis by using a strong analytical process that leads students to a better understanding of the document and its larger context.

DESCRIBE is an acronym that helps guide the student through the analysis process.

Describe the document

Explain the concept

State the unit

Comb through the document for unique features and new vocabulary

Read, and as you read ask yourself, “What is this about?”

Indicate your response

Bring it all together

Examine the graphic organizer

This strategy requires a text-based primary source, a DESCRIBE Graphic Organizer and DESCRIBE procedures (set of steps) for student reference.

The nice thing about this strategy is that once the student becomes familiar with the process, he/she can analyze text-based documents independently from the teacher. However, it is important that the teacher model several documents first in order for the students to gain confidence and proficiency. (This strategy is very effective using a smartboard or similar technology that accommodates guided learning).

The Archives and Records collection contains a wealth of primary source material that works well with this strategy; personal letters, diaries, testimonies, and other documents that are waiting to be discovered and analyzed by teachers and students alike to enrich the study of Texas history!

For more information about these and other classroom resources of the Texas General Land Office Archives and Records, please contact us at archives@glo.texas.gov, or call 512-936-9644. ✱

A Word from the Public

“I was a recent participant in a Genealogy Workshop sponsored by the GLO. Not only was the workshop well planned and focused on our needs, the staff were extraordinarily helpful and patient with those of us who were rookies at the GLO.

We were introduced to a whole body of knowledge about the various systems of land transfer that each governmental entity used to grant land to their citizens. We were taught skills that we would need to do our own research with your materials.

All in all, it was a great day. By the time I got home, my copies and map were waiting for me.”

—Katy Young, Plover, WI

New Technology for GLO Research Room

New technology in the Research Room of the General Land Office Archives and Records will make it even easier for visiting researchers to find the information they are looking for. Recently purchased e-Tables and a newly installed WiFi network provide a 21st century opportunity for visitors to research almost 300 years of Texas history. These two new additions provide even better access to the 2.5 million digitized documents and 80,000 maps that have been scanned over the last decade, and continue to put the Archives ahead of the curve when it comes to digitization and access.

“In addition to providing better access, this new technology is among the best things for our documents from a preservation standpoint,” said Mark Lambert, Deputy Commissioner of Archives and Records. “By providing such easy access to digital surrogates of documents, we are ensuring that these historic items, some dating back almost 300 years, will receive less wear-and-tear.” If you haven’t had the opportunity to visit the Land Office Archives and Records in person, be sure to come to Austin to take advantage of the new technological capabilities available for researchers today. ✱

Do you “like” Texas history?



Love Texas history? Then “like” the new Save Texas History Facebook page! Get the latest news about the Texas General Land Office conservation and educa-

tion program, including upcoming events, contests, media and Texas history trivia.

Watch for opportunities to win

maps and other Save Texas History collectibles. Give STH a thumbs up to be entered in STH drawings. Keep up with your Save Texas History friends today! ✱

ARRESTED AT THE ALAMO

JANUARY 1811 AND AN UPRISING AT THE ALAMO.



This week in Texas History, brought to you by this station and the Save Texas History program of the General Land Office.

January 22, 1811. San Antonio de Bexar. With Revolution brewing in Mexico, Spanish Governor of Texas Manuel Salcedo is under fire.

After he jails two soldiers suspected of fostering revolt, then orders troops to the Rio Grande to fight Mexican rebels, locals have had enough.

Captain Juan Bautista de las Casas takes command of troops and arrests Salcedo at the Alamo. He frees the jailed soldiers and seizes all Spanish property.

Las Casas rules for less than three months. In March he is captured by Spanish forces and later executed. Mexico won her independence from Spain ten years later.

The Casas revolt occurred 197 years ago,
This Week in Texas History.

HEAR THIS AT THISWEEKINTEXASHISTORY.ORG